(b) whether it is a fact that all the new appointees are very old, one of them being nearly 90 years' old; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for appointing such old persons?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Reconstitution of the membership of any council institution after the tenure of the members is over, is a normal phenomenon. The tenure of the nominated members of the Indian Council of Historical Research was over in November, 1997.

(b) and (c) No new appointee is 90 year old, Eminence is the decisive factor in nominating historians to CHR.

Use of Quinacrine Drug in India

*547. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether two Americans, Stephen Dr. Mumford and Dr. Kessel have developed Quinacrine, a cheap sterilisation drug with carcinogenic side-effects are reported in the Financial Express, dated 19th June, 1998;

(b) whether 26,000 women have already been sterilised in India by insertion of Quinacrine packets direct with fallopian tube;

(c) how this is happening in the country as the drug which was not used in the West and manufactured only in Switzerland, managed to enter India; and

(d) what action Government have taken against doctors/hospitals engaged in using Quinacrine?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALIA): (a) According to the International Journal of Gynaecology and Obsterics 1989, Dr. Jaime Zipper of Santiago, Chile is reported to have developed Quinacrine drug for sterilisation. Dr. Kessel & Dr. Stephen Mumford of the International Federation of Family Health (IFFH) were reported to be distributing the drug to various countries. There is no conclusive scientific evidence of this drug causing carcinogenic side effects.

(b) and (c) There has been no official import of the drug and as such it is not possible to indicate the number of women who have been sterlised by Quinacrine pellets in India. Investigations have revealed that some practitioners and N.G.O.s in India and managed to get the drug from Dr. Kessel and others as gift items and with the consent of some women volunteers inserted Quinacrine for sterlisation purpose.

(d) There is no provision under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules thereunder which prohibits the import of a drug, against personal/test licence or as a gift item from a doctor to his patients, after obtainng the patient's consent, subject to prescribed conditions.

However, in view of the question on safety of the drug raised by Indian Council of Medical Research, the Government in consultation with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) and Ministry of Law, has taken steps to ban the import of this drug in any dosage form into the country under Section 10-A and also ban its manufacture distribution and sale under Section 26-A, for the purpose'of female sterilization or constraception. Necessary notification to give effect to the same are in the final stages of processing in consultation with the Ministry of Law (Official Language Wing).

Post-Budget Price Rise of Essnetial Commodities

*548. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report "Sizzling